

Delaware State Police Warn Citizens About Identity Theft Cases Involving Fraudulent Unemployment Claims- Delaware

Delaware- Delaware State Police has seen an increase across the state in identity theft cases related to unemployment fraud claims and want to warn Delaware citizens about the new trend to avoid becoming a victim.

As a result of COVID-19, government-assisted programs and citizens in need of employment opportunities have increased. The number of unemployment claims and fraudulent unemployment claims has increased, leading to a strain on the unemployment claims system. In Delaware, the number of unemployment fraud cases are being completed online where an individual is establishing an account using the Victim's name to file an unemployment claim. If funds are paid out in rare cases, an attempt to divert the funds to a different location is conducted before disbursement, so the person completing the fraud claim receives the money. The Victim in these cases becomes aware of the attempted identity theft when they receive a letter in the mail from the Department of Labor indicating their unemployment claim was denied.

Delawareans should carefully review their United States Postal Service mail for items that may appear to be spam at first glance because Delawareans have received fraudulent unemployment paperwork from other states in addition to Delaware's Department of Labor.

Unfortunately, there are no additional steps to take to avoid becoming a victim of unemployment fraud identity theft. Individuals can use traditional identity theft protection

measures to help protect themselves from becoming a victim of identity theft.

A reminder of general identity theft protection measures would include:

- If you are the Victim of unemployment benefits fraud, contact the Department of Labor to report the issue at uifraud@delaware.gov.
- If you are currently employed and received a notice in the mail regarding your application for unemployment, make your employer aware because they may also be victimized.
- Be aware of your digital footprint and take continual steps to secure your online presence. Remember to change passwords frequently and do not use your birthdate, 1234, etc., as a password; use secure internet connections; only enter your personal or credit card information into a secured site (the padlock will be located in the search bar).
- Be aware of fake websites, text messages, phone calls, and emails soliciting your personal information and do not respond to them.
- You may be at greater risk of Identity Theft if you are a known victim of a prior Data Breach. Take advantage of any offered credit monitoring from these exposures.
- Monitor your credit regularly. There are many additional applications for credit monitoring beyond regularly reviewing your bank and credit card statements, such as Lifelock, MyIDCare, or PrivacyArmor, to name a few.

For additional information, the Federal Trade Commission offers a detailed interactive guide to Identity Theft recovery at <https://www.identitytheft.gov/Steps>

Additional useful identity theft scam websites and information can be located at the following:

<https://www.irs.gov/identity-theft-fraud-scams/identity-theft-and-unemployment-benefits>

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/UIIDtheft>

<https://news.delaware.gov/2020/05/28/the-de-dept-of-labor-releases-fraud-prevention-guidelines/>

The Delaware Department of Labor has provided the following information for reporting possible fraudulent activity or identity theft:

*"We ask all Delawareans to be vigilant in reporting possible fraudulent activity or identity theft. Please send any relevant information to the Delaware Department of Labor by sending an email to **uifraud@delaware.gov**. Please include any information that may support our investigation into the incident. Please report the incident to your local police department, and finally, file a complaint with Fraud and Consumer Protection Division at State Attorney General's Office. This division is designed to help victims of identity theft. To file a complaint, call (302) 577-8600 or visit <https://attorneygeneral.delaware.gov/fraud/cpu/complaint/>, where your complaint can be filed online.*

If you or someone you know is a victim or witness of crime or have lost a loved one to sudden death and are in need of assistance, the Delaware State Police Victim Services Unit/Delaware Victim Center is available to offer you support and resources 24 hours a day through a toll-free hotline 1800 VICTIM-1. (1-800-842-8461). You may also email the unit Director at debra.reed@state.de.us.

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